

**Amendment and Response**

Applicant: Samuel M. Lester et al.

Serial No.: 10/706,387

Filed: November 12, 2003

Docket No.: 10015833-1

Title: MODULAR PRINTING SYSTEM

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**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 1, 6, 13-21, and 29.

Please add claims 30 and 31.

Please amend claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 22, 23, and 25 as follows:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~1~~7 further comprising:  
a first printer housing;  
a second printer housing, wherein the connector system is integrated into the first printer housing and the second printer housing.
3. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~1~~7, wherein the connector system aligns a print media path between the first printer and the second printer to allow print media to pass from the first printer to the second printer without user intervention.
4. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein the connector system comprises a first connector cell integrated into a side of the first printer and a second connector cell integrated into a side of the second printer, the first and second connector cells adapted to connect the first printer to the second printer by connecting the first connector cell to the second connector cell.
5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein the first connector cell is a male connector and the second connector cell is a female connector.
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 6, wherein the controllers are further configured~~ A modular printing system comprising:  
a first printer having a first printer media path;

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a second printer having a second printer media path; and  
a connector system adapted to interchangeably couple the first printer to the second printer, and align the first media path with the second media path to allow print media to pass between the first printer and second printer;

wherein the first printer and the second printer each include a controller, and wherein the controllers are configured for communicating between the first printer and the second printer to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer.

8. (Currently Amended) A printing system, comprising:

a first printer including a first controller;  
a second printer including a second controller; and  
a print media path configured to transfer of print media from the first printer to the second printer without user intervention;  
wherein the first and second controllers are configured for communication with one another to negotiate and determine a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer.

9. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the print media path comprises a plurality of print media inputs.

10. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the print media path comprises a plurality of print media outputs.

11. (Original) The system of claim 8, wherein the first printer and the second printer each include a print media input and a print media output.

12. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the print media output of the first printer is adapted to provide print media to the print media input of the second printer without user intervention.

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13-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a modular printing system, the method comprising:

providing a first printer;

providing a second printer;

connecting the first printer to the second printer to provide a communication link between the first and the second printers and to provide a print media path between the first and second printers;

negotiating between the first printer and the second printer via~~determining through~~ the communication link to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer; and

designating the first and second printers as one of the master and a slave based upon the determination.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein negotiating between the first printer and the second printer via~~determining through~~ the communication link to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer comprises:

calculating a first value representing a summation of the first printer's attributes for acting as the master;

calculating a second value representing a summation of the second printer's attributes for acting as the master; and

comparing the first value to the second value.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the first and second printer's attributes comprise at least one of controller type, memory type, available I/O, and additional circuits.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein if the first value is equal to the second value, negotiating between the first printer and the second printer via~~determining through~~ the communication link to determine which one of the first and second printers will be a master printer further comprises:

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generating a first random number for the first printer;  
generating a second random number for the second printer; and  
comparing the first random number to the second random number.

26. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the first printer is one of an input module, printer, and finishing module.

27. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the first printer is a printer and the second printer is one of an input module and finishing module, the method further comprising:

designating the first printer as the master; and  
designating the second printer as the slave.

28. (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising:

sending a printer capability listing from the printer designated the slave to the printer designated the master.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (New) The modular printing system of claim 7, wherein the controllers are configured to negotiate a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer by collectively calculating a first value representing a summation of the first printer's attributes for acting as the master, calculating a second value representing a summation of the second printer's attributes for acting as the master, and comparing the first value to the second value.

31. (New) The printing system of claim 8, wherein the first and second controllers are configured to negotiate a master/slave relationship between the first printer and the second printer by collectively calculating a first value representing a summation of the first printer's attributes for acting as the master, calculating a second value representing a summation of the

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second printer's attributes for acting as the master, and comparing the first value to the second value.